INTRODUCTION:

Recently I received a letter from one of our partners in ministry who was concerned by an article written by Andrew Strom regarding Todd Bentley, Rick Joyner, the Revival Alliance and manifestations. Almost the entire article, except the reference to Todd Bentley, was based upon an anti-revival article written around 1996. The article asserts that the Toronto outpouring and other similar revivals were deceptive New Age movements disguised as moves of God, whose manifestations were unbiblical products of the demonic or the theatrical. The claims, however, are general in nature and the parallels and conclusions drawn by the author are, in the words of Dr. Gary S. Greig, “unsubstantiated, patently subjective accusations matched by equally shoddy, impressionistic, inaccurate, and incomplete treatments of the biblical evidence relevant to the topics they claim to have a biblical mandate to address.” Strom draws parallels between the Toronto revival and other “counterfeit movements which have destroyed genuine Revivals down through history,” but neglects to name the counterfeit movements in question. Neither does he name any genuine revival destroyed, eliminating the possibility for any actual study of these movements or the real revivals they were supposed to have ruined. The author’s argument is a general one and his accusations even more so, making it impossible to determine what in particular happened, let alone what manifestations were involved.

What follows is a response to the article. Upon writing this response, I sent it to two seminary professors whom I admire. I have great respect for their academic abilities, heart for God, and understanding the New Testament, especially in regard to the Kingdom of God and the activity of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Gary Greig added his comments, which I have quoted throughout the following document.

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1 Greig, Dr Gary S. 2010. In Response to Andrew Storm.

“In this article, a Revival historian, closely aligned with the Charismatic and prophetic movements, raises the following questions: Why do the Toronto manifestations seem literally identical to many counterfeit movements which have destroyed genuine Revivals down through history? And why are they seemingly identical to the Chinese occultic ‘Qigong’ movement, as well as Franz Mesmer’s occultic healing practice and the manifestations found throughout the “Kundalini” cults of Rajneesh, Ramakrishna, etc? Why are such manifestations found throughout the New Age movement worldwide, and yet nowhere in the Bible? If these are the days of “great deception” amongst Christians spoken of in the Bible, then shouldn’t we be a little more careful about what we allow into God’s church?

Over the past few years, the movement known as the “Toronto Blessing” has swept through many churches worldwide, particularly in the Western nations. This movement has brought with it some rather ‘strange’ spiritual manifestations, which have caused quite a bit of controversy in the church. The purpose of this article is to examine the FACTS and the historical data related to this issue, in as straight-forward a way as possible. I have been studying Revival and Reformation history now for over twelve years, and I hope that this will help me to provide an informed and factual perspective.

As is now well-known, the Toronto Airport Vineyard church (home of the ‘Toronto Blessing’) was finally expelled from the international Vineyard movement in December 1995. This expulsion came after what had apparently been twelve months of repeated warnings given to the Toronto church by John Wimber and the Vineyard Association.

I have to say on a personal level, before going any further, that having witnessed the ‘Toronto’ phenomena for myself, and having spoken to many people who have experienced it, I have personally been deeply disturbed by much of what I have seen and heard. However, it is time now to take a look at what history has to say about such phenomena”. – Andrew Strom

Randy

To start, it is worthwhile to note that there have been a number of pastors, ministry leaders and theologians who have extensively studied the history of revival and come to a very different conclusion than the one Strom supports, myself among them. Additionally, I have spoken to key leaders who were involved in the Prophetic Movement in the Kansas City area and none of them considered Strom to have been closely aligned to the Prophetic Movement itself.

Strom cites the expulsion of the Toronto Airport Vineyard church, home of the Toronto movement, from the Vineyard movement in December 1995 to support his argument that it was a false movement. According to the author, “this expulsion came after what had apparently been twelve months of repeated warnings given to the Toronto church by John Wimber and the Vineyard Association.” When asked about these supposed warnings, however, the pastor of the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church, John Arnott, responded, “I don’t recall any ‘warnings’ but there were ‘guidelines’ that the board in the US gave out, and I thought we were following them.”


Furthermore, the author fails to mention that when Wimber disfellowshipped Toronto, he did not reject the move of God or deny the move of God in Toronto. Instead, Wimber dismissed the church because he felt John Arnott had not followed his directives to try not to give meanings to the prophetic acts that were manifesting in the meetings. In his defense, Arnott had provided Wimber with a copy of the draft of the book, *The Father’s Blessing*\(^5\), including a chapter in which he tried to explain the possible meanings of the phenomena. Wimber failed to read this chapter and, when he saw the chapter in the published book, he thought Arnott had ignored his directives and was unwilling to submit to his authority. This was not actually the case; it was a terrible misunderstanding.

The main point to see here is that the disfellowshipping was not a rejection of the visitation of the Spirit by Wimber. He believed the primary purpose of the Vineyard’s renewal work was to reach Evangelicals, bringing them into openness to the gifts of the Spirit today. Wimber wanted the Evangelicals to discard their dispensational theology and to replace it with a Kingdom of God theology. This was a theology that believed that the gifts were still for today, but didn’t always give the same interpretation or meaning to the gift that was held by classical Pentecostals.

Real Fire and False Revivals:

“As many who have studied Revivals will know, it is important to remember that not only have there been many genuine Revivals down through history, but also many “counterfeit” movements as well (a number of which have resulted in quasi ‘Christian’ sects that are still with us today). Even some of the most powerful true Revivals have eventually been infiltrated (or in some cases, “hijacked”), through the devil managing to flood them with excesses and demonic manifestations, etc. Many of the great Revivalists came across such counterfeits on a regular basis, and wrote warnings against them. As John Wesley said: “At the first, revival is true and pure, but after a few weeks watch for counterfeits.” These false or demonic manifestations have often followed a very distinctive pattern. And alarmingly, I have to say that they have often resembled ‘Toronto’ very closely indeed (as we shall see).

The following is an extract from a century-old book by T.W. Caskey, in which he recalls many of the religious happenings in the Southern states of America in the early 1800’s. This was the period when many huge ‘Camp Meetings’ were held in the South, accompanied by unusual religious phenomena (which they called ‘revival’): “Some would fall prostrate and lie helpless for hours at a time... The whole congregation by some inexplicable nervous action would sometimes be thrown into side-splitting convulsions of laughter and when it started, no power could check or control it until it ran its course. At other times the nervous excitement set the muscles to twitching and jerking at a fearful rate and finally settle down to regular, straight-forward dancing. Like the ‘Holy Laugh’ it was simply ungovernable until it ran its course. When a man started laughing, dancing, shouting or jerking, it was impossible for him to stop until exhausted nature broke down in a death-like swoon...” The same writer goes on to tell how eventually a few preachers began to question whether such manifestations really were the work of the Holy Spirit. Gradually, people began to ‘search the Scriptures’ and ‘test the spirits’ a lot more than they had been, and these rather ‘bizarre’ manifestations began to die out.

Another historian has written of the great Camp Meetings of the eighteenth century (particularly in Kentucky) that crowds would often “go into trances, writhe on the ground and even bark like dogs”. As is well-known to many who have studied Revivals, such excesses and counterfeit manifestations have often flooded in particularly towards the end of a true Revival, when the devil has been trying to get in and completely destroy or discredit it. This is precisely what happened with the 1904 Welsh Revival (as you will see if you read “War on the Saints” by Jessie Penn-Lewis and Evan Roberts – a disturbing book which probably places too much emphasis on the devil, but vividly describes many counterfeit manifestations very similar to what we are seeing today. Such counterfeits are also examined in Watchman Nee’s “The Spiritual Man”).” – Andrew Strom

Randy:

The author does not mention by name any of the counterfeit movements that destroyed genuine revival, nor does he give the name of any genuine revival that was destroyed. This does not allow for an actual study of those movements or real revivals they were said to have ruined anymore than it allows one to determine what in particular happened and what manifestations were involved. It is a very general accusation and one that cannot be countered simply because there is no way to cross examine the evidence. Indeed, as you will see, this article is much more his opinion than facts, the facts of which are only partially representative of
the persons’ opinions he quotes. The author avoids the quotes and facts of any authorities who would not agree with his opinions.

The author claims that “many of the great Revivalists came across such counterfeits on a regular basis, and wrote warnings against them.” He uses a warning from John Wesley to back up his claim, but neglects to include any context. He fails to mention, however, that John Wesley and George Whitefield were themselves accused of having some kind of white powder up their sleeves that caused people to fall in their meetings. This was not true, of course, but it is true that they had similar phenomena to the revivals that occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries. Wesley was also quoted saying, “Lord send us revival without defects, but if that is impossible send us revival, defects and all.”

It is, in fact, fair to say that when the visitation of the Spirit in revival ebbs, so do the manifestations. Revivals had a tendency to last weeks, while the greater outpourings in national awakenings went for a few years. The fact that the manifestations began to die out isn’t explained solely by the author’s opinion that it was due to a more scriptural foundation. This is actually the nature of revivals – the manifestations begin to wane as the presence of the Holy Spirit is lessened and the revival begins to end. The author argues that the manifestations caused the revival to end, while in reality the revival coming to an end and the presence of God decreasing caused the manifestations to end.

Contrary to the writer’s conclusion, these camp meetings had a profound influence on the number of salvations witnessed and the number of members added to the Church. As a result, the number of Presbyterians and Baptists doubled and the Methodists quadrupled. It should be noted that the Presbyterians had the least phenomena. The Methodists, on the other hand, had the most. These manifestations caused several interesting derogatory titles to be given to the Methodists: the “shouting Methodists” and “Methodist fits.” This latter term was connected to the new phenomena that broke out at Cain Ridge and the Cumberland Revivals, called the “holy jerks.”

T.W. Caskey explains more fully in the book why there were more phenomena in the earlier revivals than the later ones in the south. The context was the rejection of manifestations, not because these manifestations were considered bizarre, but because many of the people who were experiencing them were illiterate and there was a theology of experience. Your experience of grace was the evidence of your salvation. With the progress of our nation in the south there arose a much more educated clergy who moved from the culture of experience and giving your testimony to a more reasoned approach to the Christian faith, testing all things by the Scripture. Many of these newer, more modern pastors – more liberal theologically – were being taught in seminaries that had a negative perspective on experience and found authority in knowledge instead of experience.


Peter Cartwright, a famous Methodist circuit rider and evangelist, lamented the loss of the presence and power of Spirit when the camp meetings within Methodism ceased. He represents one who believed the power of God that was manifested in those camp meetings was better than the more rationally trained pastors who knew how to parse Greek better than they knew God. A key pioneer among the Methodists, Cartwright is quoted to have said:

Right here I wish to say...when I consider the insurmountable disadvantages and difficulties that the early pioneer Methodist preachers labored under in spreading the Gospel in these Western wilds in the great valley of the Mississippi, and contrast the disabilities which surrounded them on every hand, with the glorious human advantages that are enjoyed by their present successors, it is confoundingly miraculous to me that our modern preachers cannot preach better, and do more good than they do. Many nights, in early times, the itinerant had to camp out, without fire or food for man or beast. Our pocket Bible, Hymn Book, and Discipline constituted our library. It is true we could not, man of us, conjugate a verb or parse a sentence, and murdered the king’s English almost every lick. But there was a Divine unction attended the word preached, and thousands fell under the mighty hand of God, and thus the Methodist Episcopal Church was planted firmly in this Western wilderness, and many glorious signs have followed, and will follow, to the end of time.\(^8\)

Cartwright had been one of the approximately 2,000 saved as a result of the Cane Ridge Revival. He came under conviction at Cane Ridge and was saved shortly thereafter. He always had a deep commitment to the powerful ways of the Holy Spirit that he first saw at Cane Ridge.

In his autobiography, Cartwright speaks about the Cumberland Revival that soon followed Cane Ridge. This revival affected the Presbyterians, causing a split, but it also had an effect on the Methodists:

The Predestinarians of almost all sorts put forth a mighty effort to stop the work of God...Just in the midst of our controversies on the subject of the powerful exercises among the people under preaching, a new exercise broke out among us, called the jerks, which was overwhelming in its effects upon the bodies and minds of the people. No matter whether they were saints or sinners, they would be taken under a warm song or sermon, and seized with a convulsive jerking all over, which they could not by any possibility avoid, and the more they resisted the more they jerked. If they would not strive against it and pray in good earnest, the jerking would usually abate. I have seen more than five hundred persons jerking at one time in my large congregations. Most usually, persons taken with the jerks, to obtain relief, as they said, would rise up and dance. Some would run, but could not get away. Some would resist; on such the jerks were generally very severe. To see those proud young gentlemen and young ladies, dressed in their silks, jewelry, and prunella, from top to toe, take the jerks, would often excite my risibilities. The first jerk or so, you would see their fine bonnets, caps, and combs fly; and so sudden would be the jerking of the head that their long loose hair would crack almost as loud as a wagoner’s whip.\(^9\)


\(^9\) Ibid. p. 45
Regarding this phenomena of the jerks, Cartwright tells of a large man heading a group of rowdies who had been drinking. This leader came to the meeting where this particular manifestation was prevalent. According to Cartwright, the man "cursed the jerks, and all religion" but got them nonetheless. To escape, he took off running, but he was manifesting so powerfully that he could not get away:

He halted among some saplings, and, although he was violently agitated, he took out his bottle of whiskey, and swore he would drink the damned jerks to death; but he jerked at such a rate he could not get the bottle to his mouth, though he tried hard. At length he fetched a sudden jerk, and the bottle struck a sapling and was broken to pieces, and spilled his whiskey on the ground. There was a great crowd gathered round him, and when he lost his whiskey he became very much enraged, and cursed and swore very profanely, his jerks still increasing. At length a very violent jerk, snapped his neck, fell, and soon expired, with his mouth full of cursing and bitterness.\(^\text{10}\)

Cartwright’s interpretation of this phenomena is worthy of noting. Of this, he states that he always looked upon the jerks as a judgment from God that would "bring sinners to repentance" and "show professors that God could work with or without mean, and that he could work over and above means, and do whatsoever seemeth to him good, to the glory of his grace and the salvation of the world."\(^\text{11}\)

Modern revivals often seem to consistently share some things with the past revivals, with some new phenomena introduced, causing interest in the general public. Often these phenomena also produce controversy and division within the churches. They are demonstrations of power, though not the primary power of healing and deliverance, which are classic signs of revival in the New Testament church, the first 400 years of church history and the history of the most rapid expansion of the church in the 20th century that would be the fruit of the Pentecostals. However, when Ananias and Sapphira died in Acts at Peter’s feet, who could not say the power of God was present.\(^\text{12}\) The same would be true on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were accused of being drunk. This was not because they were speaking in other languages - I can from personal experience say that no one has ever thought me drunk in a foreign country simply because I was not speaking in their language. Peter says in Acts 2:33, "Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear."

Phenomena have been very much a sign of the power of God in revivals. It is sad that, when these things are written up later, our church historians often sanitize the accounts of the meetings, removing the supernatural dimension that related to the gifts and phenomena of the Spirit.\(^\text{13}\) Cartwright has a similar appraisal:

\(^{10}\) Ibid. p. 45

\(^{11}\) Ibid. p. 45

\(^{12}\) Acts 10:5 (NIV)

\(^{13}\) Deere, Jack. 1997. *Surprised by the Voice of God* Zondervan. - a good example of how the Presbyterians redacted their own history. Another is *The Shantung Revival*. The version printed in the 1970 or later removed most of the phenomena of the original version which consisted of the actual letters of Southern Baptist missionaries which contained many references to phenomena such as laughing, falling, feeling electricity, healings and trembling.
There is not doubt in my mind that, with weak-minded, ignorant, and superstitious persons, there
was a great deal of sympathetic feeling with many that claimed to be under the influence of this jerking
exercise; and yet with many, it was perfectly involuntary. It was, on all occasions, my practice to rec-
ommend fervent prayer as a remedy, and it almost universally proved an effectual antidote. There were
many other strange and wild exercises into which the subjects of this revival fell; like for instance, as
what was called the running, jumping, barking exercise. The Methodist preachers generally preached
against this extravagant wildness.14

Peter Cartwright understood there was real fire and false fire in the phenomena. He understood some,
like the barking, to cross the line, moving from the Spirit to the flesh. One of the interpretations I have
found of this phenomenon of barking was “treeing the devil.” In one of my readings, I discovered that
when this occurred there was a breakthrough in a nearby community for the things of God. Dr. Paul King,
however, makes note of a researcher who believes this whole experience of treeing the devil was misinter-
preted. They were not barking, nor trying to tree the devil; instead they were experiencing the power of
the Spirit and were leaning against the tree to steady themselves. A researcher of the Campbellite/Christian
church movement and a colleague of King’s “determined through his research on the 1901 Cane Ridge re-
vival that what was reported by the media as “barking up a tree” and “treeing the devil” was, in reality, peo-
ple under such conviction and emotional distress that they were heaving and groaning in such a manner
that it sounded like barking, all the while feeling so faint that they must hold themselves up against a tree.”

In a similar modern day situation, a missionary friend of King’s in South Africa reported that, on two
separate occasions, he observed a pastor roaring. Thinking it demonic, he attempted to cast out the de-
mons, without success. Later, each pastor explained that, while listeners had heard only roaring, he had
been crying out for the nations to repent — in words! King conjectures that these incidents could be simi-
lar to when God the Father spoke to Jesus and some thought it was thunder (John 12:28-29) or when Paul
heard Jesus speak but others only heard a sound (Acts 22:9). I myself accused someone of roaring while
in Wilmore, Kentucky. I was speaking at the First United Methodist Church when my traveling assistant let
out what sounded like a roar of a lion. This was a mild mannered man and I had never, in several years of
travel, seen him manifest in any way. I asked him why he roared and he responded that he wasn’t. Instead,
he had seen a mental picture of marines attacking the enemy and he was yelling as they attacked. He didn’t
think he was a lion or that he was roaring. Similarly, I know of several other occasions where people were
accused of either making animal sounds or animal gestures, but they were misunderstood; in reality they
had no conception of acting or sounding like an animal.


15 King, Paul. Supernatural physical manifestations in the evangelical and holiness revival movements.
There was one reference to phenomena that Cartwright interpreted as being of great evil. It has, however, caused me to wonder if he was correct in his interpretation. He tells of people falling into a comatose-like state in the meetings or in their homes for days or even as long as a week. He writes, “... and when they came to, they professed to have seen heaven and hell, to have seen God, angels, the devil and the damned; they would prophesy, and, under the pretense of Divine inspiration, predict the time of the end of the world, and the ushering in of the great millennium.” I too would be very cautious and not encourage these prophecies regarding the end of the world, but the other visions I am not sure I would have seen as evil, but only as potentially valid.

I say this because, prior to the great Argentine revival of 1954, a young woman named Anni fell into trances, saw God and saw things in the future which did later happen in the Argentine revival. There was also a great revival in China among children, where the children would go into trances and see visions of heaven; this is recorded in the book, Visions Beyond the Veil. Children going into trances and seeing angels and heaven also happened at Metro Christian Fellowship in Kansas City, where Mike Bickel pastors. Furthermore, there have been “saints” in the Roman Catholic Church who have had similar experiences. Protestants, especially Pentecostals, have also had leaders and people who had visions or trances, though there are few reports of anyone being out for such long periods as several days.

How prevalent were some of these phenomena during the early 1800’s? Vinson Synan states, “A responsible student of these phenomena has estimated that by 1805 over half of all the Christians of Kentucky had exhibited these ‘motor phenomena.’” He goes on to say that the revival spread from Kentucky to Tennessee, the Carolinas, Western Virginia, and Georgia, reaching much of the South. According to Synan, much of the same phenomena were reported in those areas. In fact, he goes on to document the revival that hit the University of Georgia in 1800-1801, when the students were often “smitten with the jerks” and spoke in tongues:

They swooned away and lay for hours in the straw prepared for those ‘smitten of the Lord,’ or they started suddenly to flee away and fell prostrate as if shot down by a sniper, or they took suddenly to jerking with apparently every muscle in their body until it seemed they would be torn to pieces or converted into marble, or they shouted and talked in unknown tongues.

Synan goes on to say that such phenomena have been present in most revivals, no matter the denomination or doctrine, since 1800. These traits were called by some, ”Methodist fits.”

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16 Ibid. p. 47
18 We had the leaders come to our church and share with us about the children’s experiences in the late 1980’s or the early 1990’s.
These same phenomena can also be found in the writings of the famous evangelist Charles Finney. One of the greatest revivalists in America in the 1800s, his biography is filled with power encounters that he experienced and witnessed. Just hours after his conversion, Finney experienced a mighty baptism with the Holy Spirit which he said felt like waves of electricity and waves of liquid love flowing over him. This was such a powerful experience that he cried out, “I shall die if these waves continue to pass over me. … Lord, I cannot bear any more.” The first person with whom Finney spoke after this experience went to get an elder to help him, since Finney was so wiped out by the power of the experience. This elder of the church was most serious and grave. As Finney was telling him how he felt, the man fell into a "most spasmodic laughter. It seemed as if it was impossible for him to keep from laughing from the very bottom of his heart." 20

George Whitefield, John Wesley’s contemporary and the greatest evangelist of the first Great Awakening in American and the Great Evangelical Revival of England, also had experience with manifestations. Whitefield began leading this revival at the young age of 21 and he was concerned about some of the phenomena he was hearing about in the reports of John Wesley’s meetings. Wesley writes about this:

On Saturday George Whitefield and I discussed outward signs which had so often accompanied the inward work of God. I found his objections were chiefly grounded on the gross misrepresentations he heard concerning these facts. The next day he had an opportunity of informing himself better, for no sooner had he begun to invite sinners to believe in Christ than four persons collapsed close to him. One of them lay without either sense or motion. A second trembled exceedingly. The third had strong convulsions over his entire body but made no noise other than groans. The fourth convulsed equally and called upon God with strong cries and tears. From this time, I trust we shall all allow God to carry on His work in the way that pleases Him. 21

Having experienced healings in his meetings, Whitefield is quoted to have said, “…I trust, the Sun of Righteousness arose on some with healing in His wings. The people were melted down very much at the preaching of the Word.” 22 It is clear that his conclusion, as well as those of the other aforementioned evangelists, was not that the manifestations were “excesses” or “counterfeits” that “flooded in particularly toward the end of a true Revival…to destroy or discredit it” – rather the opposite.


21 Ibid. p. 140

22 Another reaction arose as a result of these camp-meetings. This reaction is found in the Restoration movement that is represented today by the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ and Church of Christ movements. They rejected the emotionalism of the camp-meetings, rejected anything they could not find in the New Testament, including musical instruments. They experienced few revivals after adopting this position.
The same can be said for the author’s reference to Jessie Penn-Lewis and Evan Roberts. While the author uses this reference as an illustration of “counterfeit manifestations,” there are others who believe that Jessie Penn-Lewis’ impact on Evan Roberts was instrumental in bringing the Welsh Revival to an end. Some believe she had a bad influence on Roberts, causing him to doubt himself and his ability to hear God. Cleddie Keith, for instance, a Pentecostal pastor/evangelist, sees Jessie Penn-Lewis’ influence from this negative perspective. Winkie Pratney likely would as well; his book on revival is one of the best books out there on the subject. He has many illustrations of the same manifestations as occurred in Toronto occurring in times of great revival and records the great Congo revival under C.T. Studd as having the laughter and other similar Holy Spirit manifestations seen in modern revivals. In one meeting in the Belgian Congo in 1914, Studd recorded:

The whole place was charged as if with an electrical current. Men were falling, jumping, laughing, crying, singing, confessing, and some shaking terribly. It was a terrible sight...This particular one can best be described as a spiritual tornado. People were literally flung on the floor or over the forms, yet no one was hurt...As I led in prayer, the Spirit came down in mighty power, sweeping the entire congregation. My whole body literally trembled with power. We saw a marvelous sight, people literally filled and drunk with the Spirit.23

One of the most important apostolic leaders involved in the revival in China in 1970 through 2010, Dennis Balcombe records that experiences just like those seen in Toronto broke out in his meetings around the same time as the Toronto revival. There was no connection between the two and, much like the Pentecostal revival around 1901-1909, the initial outbreak took place in different locations around the world, almost simultaneously. There are videos of the laughing, falling, trembling, drunk in the Spirit experiences of that revival in China. These predated Toronto, going back to 1988, there was a fresh and powerful outpouring in January 1994 that occurred at the same time as the outpouring in Toronto. The fruit of this outpouring saw 25 million saved in one house church movement and about 60 million more through other house church networks. Strom similarly claims that Watchman Nee’s “The Spiritual Man” examined manifestations and finds them counterfeit. However, when asked about this book, Dennis Balcombe comes to a very different conclusion. He states that Watchman Nee was a dispensationalist and a strong anti-Pentecostal, going on to say that Nee was much more respected in America than in China.24

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24 Date: August 21, 2010 11:27:01 AM Dear Randy, As to the man bringing the accusations against you and others, if he is using the teachings of Watchman Nee, he has clearly aligned himself with the anti-Charismatic camp. It is well known all over China that Watchman Nee was adamantly against the Pentecostal experience, which is evident by the churches that he Started or are the result of his ministry. One is the Little Flock church which everywhere is against speaking in tongues or any gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the other is the cult that came from a man who claimed to be his successor, Witness Lee.
A missionary to east Russia has also claimed that he too independently experienced in January 1994 the exact things we saw in Toronto and Balcombe saw in China. When the local believers in Russia were asked who told them to do these things, they answered, “We read the book of Acts!” They went on to explain how, just as it appeared as if the disciples were drunk when the Holy Spirit came upon them, so too it appeared as if they were all drunk when the Holy Spirit came into their meetings.

Another American missionary, David Hogan, also saw among his top indigenous leaders the same manifestations as were seen in Toronto in rural Mexico shortly after the revival in Toronto broke out. When Hogan heard about Toronto, he was unsure if it was of God. He figured that if those things were really of God, God could do them among his pastors without outside missionaries trying to replicate in his churches what they saw in Toronto. As a result, he strictly forbid any foreigner from mentioning the events of Toronto to any of his Mexican leaders. One day he came back to his place of meeting and over 30 of his normally stoic leaders were laughing, rolling on the floor, and praising the Lord. This was proof enough for him.

Dr. Gary Greig:

I agree with the point that Randy is making here with the Peter Cartwright quote; our seminaries and Bible Colleges are in desperate need of a new Spirit-led paradigm of education. Let me explain.

Scripture promises that the Holy Spirit would teach believers all things (John 14:26; John 16:13-15; 1 John 2:27), obviously including details which Scripture does not set forth systematically but which are nonetheless attested to and implied by clear scriptural evidence. We need to consciously ask the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth and help us discern error and bind the enemy from interfering with our thinking in the discernment process. James 4:7-8 is a biblical protocol for doing this; compare Peter’s thoughts being influenced by the enemy in Matt. 16:22-23. We need to do this, when we study the Word of God and when we try to evaluate what is happening in movements like the Toronto Blessing or Bethel Church, Redding, or past revival moves of God.

Our educational institutions - seminaries, Christian colleges and universities, and Bible schools - must develop a truly biblical, new academic standard of Spirit-led study, a new epistemological standard of gaining knowledge that teaches and practices the biblical principle of consciously asking the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and letting the Spirit lead in all things. The Spirit of the Lord must have the final word in the Church today as He did in the Early Church. The mode of operation in the Jerusalem council of Acts 15 was clearly not just to think things over, but to ask and listen to the Holy Spirit on all the issues being debated: “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.” This must be our mode of operation today. It is clear from their divisive, un-Christ-like rhetoric that most of the critics are not consciously asking the Holy Spirit to show them the truth about the manifestations in the Toronto Blessing, Bethel Church Redding, etc. This is clearly a mistake from heaven’s standpoint, as Acts 15:28 makes clear.
Revivalist who saw manifestations:

“A number of ‘Toronto’ writers have implied that many old-time Revivalists such as John Wesley, Charles Finney and Jonathan Edwards would be quite happy with such manifestations. This is far from the truth. I have studied the lives of these men, and all of them were strong “REPENTANCE” preachers who were very suspicious of any ‘bizarre’ goings-on. When people fell down in their meetings, it was almost always under tremendous distress and CONVICTION OF SIN. This is very different from Toronto.

The great Revivalist John Wesley, who came across many examples of counterfeit manifestations in his years of Revival ministry, wrote of one particular occasion: “God suffered Satan to teach them better. Both of them were suddenly seized in the same manner as the rest, and laughed whether they would or no, almost without ceasing. This they continued for two days, a spectacle to all; and were then, upon prayer made for them, delivered in a moment.” Charles Finney wrote, warning of the dangers of simply ‘yielding’ to strange impulses or impressions: “God’s Spirit leads men by the intelligence, and not through mere impressions… I have known some cases where persons have rendered themselves highly ridiculous, have greatly injured their own souls, and the cause of God, by giving themselves up to an enthusiastic and fanatical following of impressions.”

And Jonathan Edwards wrote, concerning the supposedly ‘heavenly’ trances that members of his congregation were entering into under the ministry of Samuel Buelle (a visiting preacher): “But when the people were raised to this height, Satan took the advantage, and his interposition in many instances soon became very apparent; and a great deal of caution and pains were found necessary to keep the people, many of them from running wild.” As Frank Bartleman (of the 1906 ‘Azusa Street’ Revival) said: “Many are willing to seek ‘power’ from every battery they can lay their hands on, in order to perform miracles… A true ‘Pentecost’ will produce a mighty conviction for sin, a turning to God. False manifestations produce only excitement and wonder… Any work that exalts the Holy Ghost or the ‘gifts’ above Jesus will finally land up in fanaticism.” Does it sound like these men welcomed ‘bizarre’ manifestations to you? Certainly not! They knew how to discern what was of God and what was not.”

— Andrew Strom

Randy:

The Vineyard movement cautions against confusing emotionalism with being touched spiritually: during the first experience of Vineyard in my Baptist Church, the leader calmed the crowd down when they were getting too excited emotionally, explaining that emotionalism can get in the way of hearing thoughts, that thoughts can be based as much in reason as not. As Dr. Gary Greig says: “Unless our reason is submitted to, and consciously depending on, the Holy Spirit, our human reason can and will lead us astray: Prov. 3:5 says, ‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding.’” The thoughts and impressions must be weighed by the Word - this is a rational process. It isn’t all reason and no impressions and neither is it all impression without reason - it is both impressions (from the Holy Spirit) and submitted to the Bible or to a biblical principle. The Vineyard taught more about discernment than I ever encountered in 7 years of theological training in Evangelical schools.

25 Greig, Dr Gary S. 2010. In Response to Andrew Storm.
Upon study of their autobiographies, it becomes clear that John Wesley, Charles Finney and Jonathan Edwards did not see these manifestations as suspicious or "bizarre," as the author claims, at least insofar as the weeping, laughing and falling down is concerned. There is an excellent article written by Dr. Paul King that indicates the leaders of the Holiness movement and early Pentecostal movements held to a middle ground. They did not automatically assume that phenomena were of the devil, but believed it could be and they exercised discernment.26

There is much in Jonathan Edwards’ writings, for instance, that indicate his experiences, along with those of his wife, were positive ones. His quote, as used by the critic, seems to indicate otherwise, but it was a correction to an abuse and an instance where Edwards practiced discernment:

But when the people were raised to this height, Satan took the advantage, and his interposition in many instances soon became very apparent: and a great deal of caution and pains were found necessary to keep the people, many of them, from running wild.27

Further evidence of Edwards’ balanced perspective on manifestation can be found in Guy Chevreau’s book, The Toronto Blessing. In it, Chevreau, who earned his PhD from the Toronto School of Theology in the theology of Jonathan Edwards, offers many quotes from Edwards’ writings.28


**Similarities to New Age:**

In mid-1995, respected international Bible teacher Derek Prince put out a tape in which he made some very strong statements about certain aspects of the Toronto movement. Like him, I would like to state categorically that I believe that humans manifesting animal noises or animal movements is not of God, but rather of the devil. (In fact, he described on the tape how he had seen many such animal manifestations during demonic rituals he had witnessed in Africa). And what about the bodily distortions and the ‘jerking’ that have also become associated with today’s Toronto movement? Is it God who desires to distort the bodies of His people so that they look like sufferers of Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Parkinson’s Disease, etc? (Repetitive ‘jerking’ is also seen regularly in many mental hospitals – ask any psychiatric nurse). I have to ask the question here: Whose work does all this sound like to you?

Alarmingly, there are also many exact similarities between the ‘Toronto’ experience and the demonic manifestations found throughout the New Age movement and also in many pagan religions. A number of Indian gurus, such as Bagawan Shree Rajneesh and Ramakrishna, have had the power to transfer a state of rapturous bliss to their followers merely by touching them. In the case of Ramakrishna, these states were often accompanied by uncontrollable laughter or weeping. Swami Baba Muktananda also had this power, according to a former devotee, and the resulting ‘Kundalini’ manifestations included uncontrollable laughing, roaring, barking, crying, shaking, etc. Some of his followers also became mute or unconscious, while many felt themselves infused with feelings of tremendous joy, peace and love.

All such experiences have been based on “yielding” oneself to the power working through these gurus. Is it any coincidence that the manifestations associated with these demonic ‘Kundalini’ cults are almost identical to those of Toronto? Could it be that the same ‘spirits’ are at work? When Yan Xin, a Chinese ‘Qigong’ spiritual Master, gave a talk to a crowd in San Francisco in 1991, the San Francisco Chronicle reported that many in the crowd began to experience what Yan called “spontaneous movements”. He told his audience, “Those who are sensitive might start having some strong physical sensations – or start laughing or crying. Don’t worry. This is quite normal.” Likewise, the demonic “ministry” of renowned eighteenth-century occultic healer Franz Mesmer, was also known to produce many similar manifestations (falling down, jerking, convulsions, strange grunts and cries, hysterical laughter, etc). To me it seems beyond dispute that there has been a powerful alien spirit let loose in many churches for some considerable time. Just because the Toronto manifestations have been cloaked in “Christian” terminology does not mean that they are from God. The fact is that such manifestations are found nowhere in the Bible, but rather right through the New Age movement. Surely this fact alone should have rung alarm bells? If these are the ‘last days’ – the days of “great deception” and ‘lying signs and wonders’, then surely we ought to be a little more careful about what we introduce into God’s church?”

— Andrew Strom

**Randy:**

Strom was not honest in his presentation of the facts of the history of revivals and their accompanying phenomena. Dr. Lewis Drummond, a professor of Evangelism at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, writes that the greatest revival seen by Baptist denomination was the Shantung Revival in north China. In the original version of “The Awakening that must Come,” it becomes clear that almost all of the phenomena that occurred in Toronto also occurred in this revival in China. This provides an excellent context for other moves of God in America and the phenomena that accompany them.

Strom lobbies that the manifestations seen in Toronto were seemingly identical to those found in other New Age movements, the Chinese Quigong movement among them. What specific manifestations he found similar, the author doesn’t say, and we are left with a vague guilt by association that provides no legitimate basis for discrediting any particular manifestation or movement. The same can be said for his claim regarding Frank Mesmer’s “occultic” healing practices and the manifestations of the “Kundalini” cults of India. There are many things in the occult and other religions that have parallels in Christianity, but this fact doesn’t discredit Christianity.

In each religion, all have recourse to their “holy writings,” all have forms of prayer, all have ethical codes for their beliefs and all have teachers. The fact that the magicians of Pharaoh were able to turn their rods into snakes doesn’t mean that Moses was involved in the occult for turning his staff into a snake. The fact that the occult has astral projection doesn’t mean that the Apostle Paul was involved in the occult when he was taken out of his body into the third heaven. The fact that the oracles of ancient Greece gave prophecies and predicted supposedly future events doesn’t mean that the Old Testament and New Testament prophets were moving by the same Spirit as the oracle of Greece. Instead, it simply points out that there are similarities in experiences in the spiritual realm; the sources behind these very similar experiences, however, are very different — one being occultic/demonic and the other being holy, either as the Holy Spirit or a holy angel.

The author doesn’t mention what manifestations in Frank Mesmer’s “occultic” healing practices are exactly the same as what was experienced in Toronto. Without specifics it is difficult to defend the historicity of the manifestations in Toronto, based upon their appearance in other genuine revivals. A study of Frank Mesmer shows that his interpretation of how he was producing healing “animal fluids” was proven false: the healings weren’t false or fraudulent, but the interpretation of how people were being healed was proven to be erroneous. They were being healed by the power of suggestion, not by animal fluids — a clear case of the placebo effect at work. Mesmer’s technique was studied and it eventually led to the development of hypnosis.

As far as manifestations are concerned, these practices are in no way connected to Toronto — another incident of guilt by association, with no real evidence presented.

Similarly, the reference to the Kundalini cults of India is without any clarification as to what manifestations the author is referencing. Detailing which of these in particular are like the Kundalini manifestations, of course, would allow history to be called to the record, proving that most true revivals have had the same manifestations: falling, trances, visions, trembling, crying and laughing. These manifestations were not only seen in Toronto, but also in the First Great Awakening, Second Great Awakening in America, Great Evangelical Revival of England under Wesley and Whitefield, the Welsh Revival, Pentecostal Revival, Latter Rain revival, Charismatic Renewal, Jesus Movement Revival, and the various revivals of the mid twentieth century. Even outpourings of the Holy Spirit in the Middle Ages in the Catholic Church had such manifestations.

Again, similarity of manifestations does not indicate similarity of sources. This is a false deduction that leads to an inevitable false conclusion. Wouter Hanegraaff’s book, The New Age Religion: Western Esotericism in the mirror of Secular Thought, reveals that the New Age religion does indeed have its similarities with Christianity. Both have a post and pre-millennial perspective and both involve a belief in a messiah, though obviously not the same one. Both have concern for healing, ecological concerns, belief in prayer and a belief in a reality beyond the naturalist perspective.

30 Exodus 7: 8-13

When you dig deeper, however, you see a whole world of differences between the the belief system of Christianity and the belief system of the New Age and Kandali.\textsuperscript{32}

While it is true that manifestations seen at Toronto are not necessarily from God simply because they have been "cloaked in 'Christian' terminology," it remains a fact it is the fruit of these things that Jesus taught us to use as a basis for discernment, something that Jonathan Edwards was in agreement with. The fruit of Toronto, as stated earlier, can been seen in the numbers of churches started, salvations seen, the witness of the former revival and revival leaders as seen above, and the fruit from the early Pentecostal movement, the Latter Rain, the Charismatic Renewal, and the churches and salvations in the Revival Alliance. The leaders of each of these movements were impacted by and embraced a move of the Spirit in their day that had parallels to almost all the manifestations in Toronto.

There is discernment based upon doctrine, not based upon manifestations. As one of the key leaders of Toronto, I have personally asked a couple of the key critics of revival to look at what I have taught and tell me what, if anything, about it is not sound, orthodox Biblical doctrine. No one has ever given me one thing that I have taught as heresy. Instead I have been told, "it isn’t your teaching, it is your practice," regarding the allowance of phenomena to occur in the meetings. The fact is, the phenomena found at Toronto can be found throughout the Bible, despite the many claims to the contrary. The manifestation in Daniel 10:7-19, and Acts 2 were the basis of the charge of drunkenness. Additionally, Peter says "that which you see and hear,"\textsuperscript{33} indicating that tongues wasn’t the only evidence of the Spirit’s outpouring. 1John 4:1-3 reads:

"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.\textsuperscript{2} This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,\textsuperscript{3} but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world."

The test isn’t connected to manifestations, but to confessions. In this case, it is about the incarnation, God became flesh in Jesus. We must look not only to what is happening on the outside, the body, but what is happening to the spirit, the soul, the intellect/mind, and will - what is the resultant theology, service, fruit of the Spirit? There is an outer and an inner side of experiences. John and Paul indicate in 1 John and in 1 Corinthians 12 that what we confess or say indicates whether or not we are truly being inspired by the Holy Spirit or a deceiving anti-christ spirit.

**Dr. Gary Greig**

The manifestations associated with the Toronto Blessing (and many other revival moves of the Spirit, as Randy rightly points out) referred to in this letter are “nowhere in the Bible”? No evidence from the Old or New


\textsuperscript{33} Acts 2:33
Testaments demonstrates the claim that such unusual phenomena did not occur in the Early Church or in ancient Israel. There is no direct discussion in the New Testament or Old Testament showing that such phenomena were, or were not, “normative” or that they did or did not occur in the Early Church and in ancient Israel. But there is much direct and indirect evidence in Scripture relating some of the manifestations and phenomena to God’s Spirit moving powerfully among His people.

The raw power of God and human flesh: shaking, falling, and vibrating

Was it New Age or unbiblical for Ezekiel to fall over in the Lord’s presence when the glory of God was manifesting where he was (Ezek. 1:28; 2:23)? Or was it New Age and unbiblical for Daniel to fall over and tremble and shake in the presence of the angel of the Lord (Dan. 10:8-11)? The following passages suggest it is normal to tremble and shake in the Lord’s presence:

Ps. 114:7—“Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord.”

Jer. 5:22—“Should you not tremble in my presence?”

Or was it New Age and unbiblical for Jeremiah’s bones to shake, vibrate and tremble and for him to stumble around awkwardly in a drunken state “because of the Lord and his holy words” (Jer. 23:9)? Was it New Age for Saul, when the Spirit came upon him in Naino at Rama, to strip off his outer clothes and lay down “prophesying” for a whole day and night (1 Sam. 19:23-24)? Hardly! It was the Spirit of God as the text of 1 Samuel 19 makes clear. Was it New Age and unbiblical for John to fall over “in the Spirit” when Christ appeared to him (Rev. 1:10, 17), or for Paul to fall on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:4; 26:11), or for the soldiers and officials to fall before Jesus in the Garden (Jn. 18:6)? Was it New Age and unbiblical for believers to stagger about intoxicated by the Holy Spirit’s presence and power in Acts 2 (Acts 2:4, 13, 15)? Hardly! Such phenomena clearly happened when the Spirit of the Lord became manifest in glorious power, according to Scripture.

Energy, electricity, heat, and fire—yes, they’re in the Bible too

Manifestations like electricity and heat are not at all foreign to biblical descriptions of the Holy Spirit’s power, as the critics claim. Jesus said on occasions that He felt “power (Greek 

\textit{dunamis}) had gone out from him” to heal people (Mk. 5:30; Lk. 5:17; 6:19; 8:46)? Such 

\textit{dunamis} power going out of him healed a woman instantly (Mk. 5:30; Lk. 8:46), caused a paralytic to walk (Lk. 5:17ff.) and healed all the sick and demonized

\textsuperscript{34} The Hebrew verb in Jer. 23:9 is \textit{rakhafu}, which is the qal–perfect, 3rd plural, of \textit{rakhaf} meaning “flutter, tremble, shake,” as the RSV (“shake”), KJV (“shake”), and NIV (“tremble”) render it (see E. Lohse, in G. Kittel, ed., \textit{Theological Dictionary of the New Testament}, vol. 9, pp. 623–624; Bertram, “saleuo,” in ibid., vol. 7, p. 66). This meaning is suggested by Mishnaic Hebrew \textit{rakhaf} “move, vibrate” (Jastrow, \textit{Dictionary s.v.} which knows no attestations of this root meaning “grow soft, relax” against \textit{BDB’s} \textit{Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon} suggestion that \textit{rakhaf} only here in the Hebrew Bible means “grow soft, relax” for which there is no demonstrative evidence in the text itself—see Koehler and Baumgartner, \textit{The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament} [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001], vol. 2, pp. 1219–1220); by piel forms meaning “hover (of an eagle)” in Gen. 1:2; Deut. 32:11; by Semitic cognates: Ugaritic \textit{rhp} “fly, flutter”; Syriac \textit{rekhef} “extend the wing” (J. Aistleitner, \textit{Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache} [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1974], pp. 292–293); and by the Septuagint’s rendering the word with Greek \textit{saleuo} “shake.”
of crowds that touched him (Lk. 6:19). It is important to note that Greek *energeia* denoting “working, energy” is a synonym of Greek *dunamis* “power,” the word used in these passages of Jesus’ healing power. And in Col. 1:29 and Phil. 3:21, Paul associates God’s “power” (*dunamis*) with God’s “energy (*energeia*)”: Col. 1:29, the Greek literally says “with all His *energeia* ['working, energy'] which is working in me in *dunamis* ['power’]; Phil 3:21 Greek literally ”according to the *energeia* ['working, energy'] of His *dunasthai* ['being empowered’ verbal infinitive from the same root as *dunamis*, idiomatically ’by which He is empowered’] also to subject to Himself all things.”

Some New Testament scholars have recognized that all these references to *dunamis* power in the accounts of Jesus’ healings quite clearly approximate the modern description of electricity (and again, it is simple to “do the math” here: electrical resistance does indeed cause heat). British New Testament scholar, Dr. Cyril Powell agrees with other mainstream New Testament scholars who describe the *dunamis* power in the accounts of Jesus’ healings as having the qualities of electricity.

Some of Luke’s references to healing *dunamis* “power” call for closer examination. They seem strangely “physical.” There is, for instance, the reference already noted in [Luke] 5:17f.: “And it came to pass on one of those days, that he was teaching . . . and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.” ”In other words,” comments Otto, ”the charismatic power had its particular hours, when it was present for healing, and manifestly also those when it was not present. . .”

The picture conveyed by Luke 5:17, several commentators have suggested, is similar to that of being filled with an electric potential. . . The fact that so many of Jesus’s miracles involve the use of touch heightens this impression. . . Mark’s comment ([Mark] 5:30) leaves little doubt that he understood that this touch was felt by Jesus in such a way that He knew that *dunamis* “power” had gone from Him. . . Luke 6:19 is in the same vein: “for power came forth from him, and healed all.”

Some scholars, points out Dr. Powell, have viewed ”the *dunamis* “power” mentioned here as something automatic and quasi-physical, like a fluid or operating like an electric current.” And in his 1977 Fuller Seminary doctoral dissertation on the Spirit in Paul’s letters, Dr. Walter C. Wright summarized the views of mainstream

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New Testament scholars about the language describing the Holy Spirit and power in the New Testament: "If the extension of ruach [the Spirit] were expressed today, one might draw similar images from the language of electrical technology."

**The Holy Spirit used shadows, handkerchiefs, and aprons**

Was it New Age and unbiblical for people to seek healing by trying to get Peter’s shadow to fall on them (Acts 5:15)? Hardly! Or was it New Age and unbiblical that the sick and demonized were healed by handkerchiefs and aprons that Paul had touched in Acts 19:12? Hardly! But the critics charismatic and Pentecostal moves of the Holy Spirit are more than willing to criticize modern day examples where God may use strange or unusual means to touch and heal people, but they are strangely silent about the fact that the same kinds of unusual means are clearly described in Scripture.

If one wants to avoid unusual means or manifestations of the Holy Spirit, one might as well close their Bible and never read it again, because the Scriptures are full of sometimes bizarre manifestations that represent spiritual transactions and God’s glory and power touching humanity. And last time I checked, no passage in Scripture suggests that the Lord is sitting on His throne in heaven, wringing His hands over whether bizarre manifestations produced by His own presence and glory will somehow lead His people astray. He doesn’t seem to mind, so why should we be so concerned, as long as our focus is on Jesus, on His priority of making disciples, and on spreading the gospel and His Kingdom among the nations? Yes, I agree with Randy, and even the author of this letter, that we need to discern the fruit of all manifestations, but we need the Holy Spirit’s guidance and not simply our own minds doing the work of discernment: we need to ask Him first and foremost, cry out to Him, and depend on Him for true discernment (John 16:13-15).

It seems to me that the following bizarre manifestations described in the Scripture passages below would have driven modern heresy hunters and critics crazy, were they to have been reported today. They are a witness to the fact that we have a creative God, and He doesn’t care what humanity thinks of His creativity!

- **Gen. 15:17-18**—a man claims that God made a smoking pot with a blazing torch float through the air and pass between sacrificial animal parts to signify that God made a covenant with the man.
- **Judges 6:34**—a man claims that the Holy Spirit wrapped around him like an invisible cloak or force field of power around his body, so he could lead troops into battle.

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40 Judges 6:34, Hebrew literally "Then the Spirit of the Lord clothed [lavash, qal perfect, 3rd fem. sing.] Gideon.” The same Hebrew verb, *lavash* “to clothe,” describes the Spirit of God coming upon a prophet named Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest in 2 Chronicles 24:20: Hebrew literally, “And the Spirit of God clothed (lavash) Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. And he stood up before the people and said to them, “This is what God says…”
I Sam. 19:23-24— a man claimed that the Holy Spirit came so forcefully on him that he had no choice but to strip off his clothes and lay down “prophesying” for a whole day and night.

Isa. 6:7--A man claims that a burning coal was brought to him by an angel and singed his lips to cleanse him of sin and guilt.

Jer. 1:9--A man claims that God’s hand touched his lips to give him God’s words.

Ezek. 36:26--A man claims that God told him that God would take a heart of stone out of a person’s body and replacing it with a heart of flesh to give them a “new spirit.”

Mk. 9:7--A man says a luminescent cloud suddenly materialized, and a voice came out it and spoke as God the Father to him.

Jn. 1:48-- a man claims that a messianic rabbi had a vision of him under a fig tree and that this led to his conversion and faith.

Acts 8:39-40--A man suddenly disappears and then reappears almost 20 miles away, claiming that God’s Spirit transported him from one location to the other to do more evangelism.

Acts 9:3-8--A man claims that he and his friends were knocked down to the ground and that he was blinded by a brilliant shining figure in the sky speaking Aramaic to him.

Acts 10:9-17--A man claims that while he was praying, he fell into a trance, seeing a sheet full of camels, rabbits, pigs, eels, vultures, bats, rats, and lizards and hearing a voice say “kill and eat” (Acts 10:11, 13; Lev. 11; Deut. 14). He claimed that the vision means God wants him to redirect evangelistic work to non-Jews.

Rev. 10:9-11--a man claims that an angel told him to eat a scroll which tasted sweet but which turned his stomach sour. The man claimed that this signified he was to prophesy certain things over nations.

Why don’t the critics today call these biblical manifestations New Age and weird? If anything, these passages show that someone saying that something is New Age or weird in someone else’s testimony obviously does not in itself demonstrate any inconsistency with Scripture or with the work of the God of Scripture. What the testimony leads to—the fruit—in terms of where ones focus is, in terms of what is taught and in terms of how one lives, is the more crucial issue to test in the light of Scripture, as Jesus clearly states in Matt. 7:20-23. Does the manifestation lead to a greater love and focus on Jesus and His mission of preaching the gospel to all nations and peoples? Does it lead to embracing biblical truth or to embracing error? These are the crucial questions to ask of any manifestation or spiritually unusual event.

Cataloging manifestations of God’s power coming upon human bodies

The following manifestations and phenomena associated with the Toronto Blessing and that have occurred in all outpourings, awakenings, and revivals of the Holy Spirit in the last couple of centuries and throughout Church history, are also described in Scripture.
The presence of God’s Spirit in power and glory may be marked in Scripture by the following:

1. **Shaking or trembling**—Exo. 19:16; 1 Chron. 16:30; Ezra 9:4; Psa. 2:11; 96:9; 114:7; 119:120; Isa. 66:5; Jer. 5:22; 23:9; Dan. 10:10-11; Matt. 28:4; Acts 7:32; Heb. 12:21.

2. **Falling over**—Gen. 17:1, 3; 1 Kgs. 8:11 (“the priests were not able to stand [i.e., they fell over!] to serve, because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple”); Ezek. 1:28; 3:23; Dan. 8:17-18; 10:9; Matt. 28:4; Jn. 18:6; Acts 9:4 (26:14); 1 Cor. 14:25; Rev. 1:17.

3. **Intoxicated state of mind**—Acts 2:4, 13, 15; Eph. 5:18; cf. 1 Sam. 1:12-17; 1 Sam. 19:23f.

4. **Bodily writhing and distortion under the influence of a demon**—Mk. 1:21-26; 9:26; Lk. 8:28.

5. **Laughing, shouting, or weeping**—Gen. 17:1, 3, 17⁴¹; Ezra 3:13 (“rejoicing,” which certainly included laughter and shouting, is so loud that it is heard “far away” from Jerusalem—that must have been pretty loud!); Neh. 8:6, 9 (weeping in the midst of worship and praise); 12:43; Ps. 126:2; Prov. 14:13; Acts 14:10 (Greek literally “[Paul] said with a loud voice”).


7. **Feeling energy, electricity, heat**—Mk. 5:29-30 (cf. Matt. 9:22; Lk. 8:44, 46-47); Lk. 6:19; cf. Col. 1:29 (where energeia “working, energy”⁴² is coupled in the text with dunamis “power”); Judg. 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sam. 10:6, 10; 16:13 (the Spirit rushing like fire).⁴³

8. **Feeling deep peace**—Rom. 14:17; 15:13; 1 Cor. 14:33; Phil. 4:5-7.

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⁴¹ Abraham hardly laughed just to release stress in this situation in Gen. 17:17, since it is immediately followed in 17:18 by his pleading with the Lord and the Lord correcting his misguided desire. Such abnormal laughter clearly came from the Lord manifesting His presence to Abraham and speaking His word to Abraham.


⁴³ The Spirit of the Lord is described as “rushing upon” (Hebrew tsalakh “rush upon”) Samson in Judges 14:6, 19 and 15:14; upon Saul so that he “prophesies” in 1 Sam. 10:6, 10; upon David when Samuel anointed him with oil in 1 Sam. 16:13. The interesting thing about the Hebrew verb tsalakh “rush upon” is that it is not only used to describe the Holy Spirit being poured out on individuals, but it is also used of fire rushing upon Israel in Amos 5:6—Hebrew “Seek the LORD and live, lest He rush (tsalakh) like fire upon the house of Joseph; it will consume, and Bethel will have no one to quench it.”
9. Visible radiance seen on the face or around the head—Acts 2:3-4 (tongues of fire); 6:15 and 7:55 (Stephen, filled with the Spirit had a radiant face); compare 2 Cor. 3:7, 13, 17-18 and Exo. 34:29 (the radiance of Moses’ face is from the “Lord who is the Spirit”).


These phenomena which may accompany the presence of God’s Spirit are not only attested in Scripture, but they are also attested in early Judaism and post-biblical early Christian tradition.

The Early Church looked for signs of the Spirit at work

Many accounts in Scripture of Jesus, the apostles, and the Early Church healing people do not give details of just what happened when someone was prayed for and healed. But certain accounts, which recount some details, show that manifestations were paid attention to, which showed the Spirit was working and which showed that healing was taking place:

Mk. 5:29-30 (cf. Mat. 9:22; Lk. 8:44, 46-47)—The woman with the hemorrhage is said to have “felt in her body” (egno to somati) that the bleeding had stopped. Jesus also felt the power or energy (dunamis = energeia) of God leave his body to heal her.

Acts 6:15 says Stephen’s face was “like the face of an angel,” to which passage compare Acts 12:7; Ezek. 40:3; Dan. 10:6; Lk. 2:9; Matt. 28:2-3.

We should not be surprised that God’s Spirit moved among Jewish people who were not yet saved. The story in Acts 10:1-6 of Cornelius being visited by an angel of the Lord, before he was saved, shows that God is reaching out to pre-believers through His Spirit and His angels to bring them to Jesus. So the following examples of the Holy Spirit’s power in early Judaism, represent, in my opinion, God reaching out trying to bring Jewish people to their Messiah, Jesus (John 1:9 says of Jesus is “the true light, who gives light to everyone, [who] was coming into the world”). The presence and power of God’s Spirit was marked in early Judaism by light and radiance, radiant face (E. Sjöberg, in G. Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 6: 381-382 and nn. 250, 259); prophetic vision, knowledge, sudden inspiration (Ibid., pp. 382, n. 263; 384, n. 284; 386; cf. p. 408, n. 489).


See references above, note 4, to Greek energeia meaning “energy” and being synonymous with Greek dunamis “power.”
Lk. 6:19--Healing power (*dunamis*) was felt coming out of Jesus into the crowd, healing the sick and demonized (*dunamis par' autou exerkheto kai iato pantos "power was coming forth from him and was healing all").

Mk. 8:23-24--When Jesus laid hands on the blind man of Bethsaida to restore his sight, Jesus asked him if anything was happening, "Do you see anything?" (8:23). Because the man was only partially healed and saw "people . . . like trees" (8:24), Jesus laid hands on him again to fully restore his sight.

Acts 9:17-18--When Ananias laid hands on Paul and prayed for him to be healed of his blindness (9:17), the text describes "something like scales" falling from Paul’s eyes (Acts 9:18).

These passages suggest that Jesus and the Early Church did watch for the manifestations of God’s work and healing when they prayed for and ministered to the sick and demonized. And they watched for manifestations as one of many ways of telling that the Holy Spirit was at work.
Reason/Emotional/Biblical Principle:

“Many Christians who have become involved with Toronto have assumed that it “must be of God” because it often results in ‘inner healing’ or other spiritual experiences. However, such occurrences are certainly not proof that this movement is of God. In fact, the devil specializes in providing virtually identical experiences in occult and New Age groups right around the world. And as is well-known, “inner healing” has always been one of the very major emphases of today’s New Age movement (while it cannot be found in the Bible). Such experiences are obviously something that Satan finds it very easy to manufacture, especially when he is given the opportunity on such a grand scale. As the Bible clearly states, the devil will gladly disguise himself as an “angel of light” in order to deceive Christians (2 Cor 11:14). However, in saying all of this, I do want to make it clear also that I believe that God has DELIBERATELY ALLOWED this deception to sweep through at this time, to “test” His church.

One of the most obviously “New Age” aspects of Toronto has been the emphasis on ‘switching off your mind’, getting your mind “out of the way”, yielding yourself unthinkingly to the spirit that is operating, etc. I tell you, this exact practice is used all over the world to open up New Age devotees to demonic influence. It is dangerous in the extreme. The Bible makes it clear that demonic spirits are well capable of masquerading as the “Holy Spirit”.

This is why the apostle John wrote: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God” (1 Jn 4:1). I am afraid I cannot agree with the idea of ‘directing’ the Holy Spirit or proclaiming “Come, Holy Spirit!” To me, such unscriptural practices are bound to lead to deception sooner or later. But the concept of just ‘switching off your mind’ and yielding to whatever spiritual impulses come upon you, surely has to be the most deadly practise of all.

As Jessie Penn-Lewis wrote (in conjunction with Welsh Revival leader Evan Roberts): “… these demons hover round the soul, and make strange suggestions to the mind of something odd, or outlandish, or contrary to common sense or decent taste. They make these suggestions under the profession of being the Holy Ghost. They fan the emotions, and produce a strange, fictitious exhilaration, which is simply their bait to get into some faculty of the soul… another person said he felt like rolling on the floor, and groaning and pulling the chairs around, but he distinctly perceived that the impulse to do so had something wild in it; and a touch of self display contrary to the gentleness and sweetness of Jesus; and, as quick as he saw it was an attack of a false spirit, he was delivered. But another man had the same impulse, and fell down groaning and roaring, beating the floor with his hands and feet, and the demon entered into him as an angel of light, and got him to think that his conduct was of the Holy Ghost, and it became a regular habit in the meetings he attended, until he would ruin every religious meeting he was in… The effects of being influenced by this sort of demon is manifold, and plainly legible to a well-poised mind. They cause people to run off into things that are odd and foolish, unreasonable and indecent…”

The above authors also make the following very crucial statement in the same book: “The false conception of ‘surrender’ as yielding the body to supernatural power, with the mind ceasing to act, is the HIGHEST SUBTLETY OF THE ENEMY.” Surely no one who is reading this can still be in any doubt as to what spiritual ‘source’ the ‘Toronto’ movement comes from? — Andrew Strom

Randy:

Strom argues that there is no Biblical truth behind “inner healing,” which he claims as a “major emphasis of today’s New Age movement.” However, change the phrase from “inner healing” to “sanctification” and suddenly you have something Biblical after all — it is simply a matter of semantics. Inner healing, as part of the ministry of sanctification, is therefore biblical. Of course, there are many different strategies involved with inner healing, some of which different denominational streams may not always agree with, but this blanket condemnation and lumping together of all the different methods reveals a lack of understanding of the models of inner healing. It is a categorical rejection of things in inner healing models that are strongly based upon biblical principles, such as forgiving people who hurt you and renouncing inner vows you have made — all of these have biblical precedence.
The context of 2 Cor. 11:14 looks back to 2 Cor. 11:4. These superapostles (so-called) were preaching a different Jesus, different Spirit, different gospel. That is one of the ways to know the messenger is not of God, if it is a different Jesus that is preached, a different Holy Spirit or different gospel.

The principles behind inner healing, in this case, do not involve New Age methods. What the critics claim as a "switching off" of the mind is being used out of context. In reality, it is not an empty mind being sought, but one focused on what God is about to do, paying attention to thoughts, mental pictures, or feelings, in expectation that God is going to heal and empower. It is a time to listen to God and to receive, not to ask for what is wanted (there is a time and place for that). The Scriptures talk about "quieting ourselves, including quieting our minds, before the Lord" in Psalm 131:2 and Hab. 2:20: "But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me"; "But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him." This is not a practice used to "open up New Age devotees to demonic influence" - it is used to open people up to the Holy Spirit. We're not asking the mind to cease to act but to "Be still and know that I am God" God still sometimes prefers for us to quit talking and start listening.

Therefore, this is not switching off the mind, but focusing the mind on God's activity in our lives and listening for the Holy Spirit to communicate with us or with the person we are praying for. This could be by impressions or by mental pictures. However, the communication should be judged by the content, intention or direction of the word as to whether it is of God, not simply based upon whether or not it is consistent with the revelation of Scripture. When we ask people not to pray or to get out of their rationalism, we are inviting them from skepticism to expectation, from rationalism to faith, from what sometimes is nothing more than vain uttering of rote prayers without any expectation while saying them. We want them to engage their mind in discerning what is happening in their body, to dialogue with us about what is happening, and to offer praise to Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, as well as thanksgiving for what happens.

Similarly, we do not command or direct the Holy Spirit to do our will. The author confuses two types of prayer – commands and petitions. We petition the Holy Spirit to come, but we command the body parts to obey our words as we utilize our authority in Christ based upon the concept of authority delegated to us in Christ and being seated with Him in Heavenly places. We also command the demons to leave and cancers to die.

It is not that there is no discernment; just that God can't be limited to the standard of common sense and decent taste. It is entirely possible that the person mentioned by the critic, who said he "felt like rolling of the floor, and groaning and pulling the chairs around" and felt as though there was "something wild in it; and a touch of self display contrary to the gentleness and sweetness of Jesus," experienced something that came from either a false spirit or his own spirit. Nonetheless, it becomes a matter of discernment, and I believe that to limit God would be a violation of biblical teaching. The critic's line of thought would have rejected many things God told the prophets to do in the Old Testament: marrying a prostitute, for instance, like God told Hosea or stripping off the outer clothes to the underwear of their day, as God told Isaiah. Limiting the Lord of the Hosts, the Almighty, to common sense and decent taste is truly a limitation on the activity of God in the Bible.

To conclude that falling, laughing, crying, shaking, tongues, and other manifestations of the Spirit are always of the devil is to go beyond wisdom, revival history and the Bible itself. There is nothing unreasonable or foolish when someone is so full of joy that they laugh, so full of love that they cry, so full of power that they tremble, so full of peace that they become dormant, so overwhelmed by God's presence that they fall, so taken by His presence that they have trances or visions or so filled with the wine of the Spirit that they are drunk in the spirit.
These phenomena are not unreasonable, odd, or foolish in the proper context – they actually make perfect sense in the correct context.18

Strom hasn’t really proven his argument either from history or from Scripture. He ignores accounts of the same phenomena that occurred in other revivals: the First Great Awakening, the Second Great Awakening, the 1858 Prayer Revival, the Welsh Revival, the Azusa Street Pentecostal Revival, the Latter Rain Revival 1947, the Healing Revival 1948, and the Revival through Billy Graham 1949, the Protestant Charismatic Renewal 1962, the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal 1967, the Jesus Movement 1967, the Vineyard Renewal in 1982, the Revival of the mid 1990’s, the Laughing Revival with Rodney Howard-Browne in 1993, the Toronto Blessing in 1994, the Pensacola Outpouring with Steve Hill and John Kilpatrick 1995, the Smithton Revival with Steve Gray 1996, and the Lakeland with Todd Bentley 2007.49

In the end, everything comes down to discernment. Strom claims that there were many manifestations seen in Toronto that were also seen in the New Age movement. However, many things were also seen, such as worshiping Jesus, confessing Jesus as the Christ, surrendering to his Lordship, realizing God as Father who loves us, and seeing people called to the mission fields to evangelize the lost, serve the poor, the widows and the orphans. All of this was fruit of the revival and contradictory to what is seen in the New Age. I teach on how to discern when something is coming from the New Age. It is not about manifestations, but about worldview and doctrinal belief, especially about the nature of God, humankind, and Jesus. We are to recognize what is false by a different Jesus, a different Holy Spirit, and/or a different gospel. Not by looking at the outward but the inward manifestation or the outward display of fruit that is a result of the inward work, the interior work of the Holy Spirit.

Once again, parallels between what is seen at revivals and what is seen in the New Age do not prove anything. The Bible never makes parallels in the spiritual realm a basis for testing – the fruit is what the Bible gives us as the test.

Comparing Franz Mesmer, whose occultic healings were based in hypnotism and the power of suggestion, to the leaders of the mid-1990’s revival, who did not hold the same beliefs, shows a blatant misinterpretation of the revivals. Claiming that followers broke into uncontrollable laughter or weeping when the Indian gurus of Ramakrishna touched them or when Yan Xin, a Chinese ‘Qigong’ spiritual Master, spoke is the same as the weeping seen at revivals invalidates every revival with which that weeping was associated. Considering that weeping is one of the most common signs of conviction of Holy Spirit and blessing by Holy Spirit, rejecting it would be an error in logic – it would invalidate almost every known revival. It is also an exegetical error and inconsistent with the Holy Bible.

Additionally, the fruit of the Kundalini experience previously mentioned is to accept a totally different worldview from that of the Bible, from Theism to Pantheism, and the denial of the uniqueness of Jesus as the only begotten son of God, of his atoning death, resurrection and ascension. By contrast, the fruit of the experiences in Toronto included a closer relationship to God, greater faith in Jesus as the Son of God, more freedom of worship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Much of the emphasis in Toronto was on the Father; that is why John Arnott called his book not The Toronto Blessing, but The Father’s Blessing.

48 see Daniel 10; Revelation 1; 2 Corinthians 12

49 There were some leaders in the Latter Rain who went into error in this revival teaching on the Manifest Sons of God, but this was not reflective of the whole revival or even the majority of the leaders. We must become more discerning of revivals, using a scalpel rather than an ax to separate that which is error from that which is truth in these revivals. This type of discernment is also needed in our theological seminaries, Bible Schools and in the teaching ministries of many teachers in the past and today.
There has to be a distinction between outward manifestation and inward experience to make these types of comparisons. When you move past a superficial examination of similarities in outward experience and begin to examine the inward experiences and their fruit, we gain much support for believing this is God. We realize that the fruit is very good and that ”Satan would be divided against himself and his house could not stand” if this was indeed his work. An evil spirit is not going to lead people to lay down their lives to reach almost 2,000,000 people in Pakistan and Mozambique. An evil spirit is not going to cause 12,000 churches to be established in just two countries, where the revival is at work through people who fell to the ground and shook, wept, laughed and felt electricity. An evil spirit is not going to lead people to establish Christian schools with Christian values and Christian orphanages as have been established by some of the main leaders affected by Toronto, namely Leif Hetland and Heidi Baker. The great theologian of Revival, Jonathan Edwards, noted that revival could not be determined genuine or false on the basis of manifestations, but had to be determined on the basis of fruit. There was also only one “scientific” study of Toronto’s fruit, conducted by the most respected sociologist of Religion in America, Dr. Margaret Paloma, and the evidence was overwhelming positive. See her book, Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessings and Reviving Pentecostalism to verify this fruit. Also, read Dr. Paul King’s article in Pneuma Foundation, Supernatural Physical Manifestations in the Evangelical and Holiness Revival Movements.

Dr. Gary Greig:
The author fails completely to explain what it means that Messiah Jesus heals the broken-hearted: Isaiah 53:4-6 makes it clear that on the cross, Jesus carried the sins of the world and not only the physical consequences of those sins, but also the mental and emotional consequences of those sins: Isaiah 53:4 explicitly says, ”He bore our sicknesses” (Heb kholoyenu “our infirmities, sicknesses (of the body), diseases”) and ”He carried our sorrows/mental, emotional pains” (Heb makhvenu “our mental, emotional pains” e.g. same Hebrew word used in Prov. 14:13, ”the heart may ache” the verb yikh’av from the same root as the noun makhov in Isa 53:4.) Luke 4:18 (Isa 61:1) was Jesus’ Kingdom ministry mandate and is therefore our mandate: Preaching the gospel is meant to be accompanied by: physical healing (”recovery of sight for the blind” Lk. 4:18) and inner healing—healing of the heart (“proclaim freedom for the prisoners…release the oppressed” Lk 4:18; ”bind up the brokenhearted” Isa. 61:1). Inner Healing is a major theme in Messianic prophecies, and in the NT it is part of the process of transforming and renewing our minds by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12:1-2):

1. Rom. 12:2— ”be transformed by the renewing of your mind”
2. 2 Cor. 3:18— ”and we, who . . . all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His likeness . . . which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”
3. Ps. 34:18— ”The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”
4. Ps. 146:7-8— ”He upholds the cause of the oppressed . . . The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord gives sight to the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down.”
5. Ps. 147:3— ”He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds”
6. Isa. 51:12— ”I am He who comforts you.”

Well then, the author has to accuse Ezekiel of being New Age, because Ezekiel was led by the Lord to prophesy to the Spirit in exactly this way: Ezek. 37:9 Hebrew bo’i haruakh ”Come O (Holy) Spirit!” Note that Hebrew word ruakh in Ezek. 37:9 clearly refers to the Holy Spirit not just generic ”breath,” because in Ezek. 37:6 ruakh is translated in the Greek Septuagint as pneuma mou.”My Spirit” referring to God’s Spirit, and because of the allusion in Ezekiel 37 to creation by the Holy Spirit in Gen. 1:2, echoed in the inbreathing of God’s life into the first man’s body in Gen. 2:7.

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The Holy Spirit is always with us according to John 14:16-19 and Psalm 139:7-10. But He also comes specially and manifests special anointing for special purposes—Luke 5:17 “the power of the Lord was present to heal” implying that there were times when the power of the Lord was not present; I Cor. 5:4 “When . . . the power of the Lord Jesus is present”; Isa. 55:6 “Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.” Scripture shows the Spirit of the Lord can be manifestly present or manifestly absent, and Scripture does indeed show examples of calling on the Spirit of the Lord to come to those praying: Note 2 Cor. 3:17 “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom”; Ps. 141:1 “O Lord, I call to you; come quickly to me”; Ps. 139:7 “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?”; 2 Chron. 6:41 “O Lord . . . come to your resting place.” The author also seems completely to ignore church history on this point. Prayer to the Holy Spirit asking Him to come and descend on the worshiping congregation and on the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper has been a standard part of Eastern Orthodox and Anglican liturgical prayers and hymns both of which date back to the most ancient stages of the post-biblical Early Church.\(^{51}\)

**Biblical Basis for Discernment:**

“It is well-known throughout Christendom that the Bible speaks of the ‘last days’ as being a time of great deception and apostasy, and it is obvious from the Scriptures that much of this will arise from WITHIN THE CHURCH, so as to deceive the Christians. (See Mt 24, etc). The Apostle Paul wrote that, “in the last days PERILOUS TIMES WILL COME. For men shall be lovers of their own selves...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Tim 3:1-4). And, “the Spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to SEDUCING SPIRITS, and doctrines of devils” (1 Tim 4:1). Surely, as we have seen, we are indeed living today in such ‘perilous times’. There have been several dreams and visions given to ‘prophets and intercessors about the Toronto movement. In one particularly powerful dream given to an Auckland man many months before the term “Toronto Blessing” was even heard of here, he was shown that there would be TWO revivals. (This was the same man who was also given the open vision of the Bride of Christ described in a previous article). In this dream of the ‘TWO REVIVALS’, he found himself in a large auditorium full of people. He noticed that many of those down the front of the meeting were FALLING DOWN LAUGHING AND CRYING, etc, and the words that were clearly spoken to him to describe what he was seeing were: “LAODICEAN REVIVAL”. He was then seated with the ‘little’ people in the auditorium, who had not become really “caught up” in this falling and laugh-ing, etc. And as he sat there, these ‘little’ people were steadily drawn away from this ‘Laodicean’ scenario, until there was yawning gulf between them and those who were still “partying on” at the front of the hall. Suddenly, thousands of young people burst out all around these little people, and they began to minister to them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophet knew that this was the beginning of the true Revival. Glory to God!

It is my belief that in many ways the Toronto experience has been the perfect deception for today’s Laodicean church: It cost nothing, it was “instant” and convenient, it conferred spiritual blessings, ‘touches’ and experiences without any need for conviction of sin, deep repentance or ‘taking up the cross’, and best–of–all it gave a flagging, powerless church some new “signs” to prove that ‘all was well’ after all. The real issue that lies at the heart of this whole controversy is one that revolves around the very character of God Himself. For it is obvious that we are being asked to choose

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between at least two “Gods” here. On the one hand we have Toronto’s version of “God” – a being who lives to bring ‘touches’ and bodily sensations upon his people, who loves to “party” with them – to ‘loosen them up’ so that they cast off all restraint and do foolish things that they would never normally do. Many of these touches may appear to outside observers to be ‘ugly’ or even revolting and frightening (similar to asylum-type mental or drug disorders, etc.), but, hey, let’s just get our mind out of the way, relax and enjoy it all! Who cares if it looks or sounds completely ‘demonic’ (animal noises, hysterical laughter, bizarre jerking, etc.), so long as it feels good and seems to heal all those past ‘hurts’? To me, this is the very essence of the touchy-feely “Laodicean” view of God – a ‘God’ made entirely in their own image, and for their own convenience. Love without responsibility. Mercy without judgment. A permissive, “Santa Claus” God – perfect for the shallow, pleasure-loving age in which we live.

On the other hand, there is the God of the Bible: Yes, He is a God of love, but also of justice and of judgment. Yes, He is a God of mercy, but also of war and of vengeance, – waiting patiently for the hour when His enemies will be delivered into His hand, so that He can cast them forever into a living hell. Yes, He is a God of liberty, but He is also a jealous God, who visits the sins of the fathers onto the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him. Yes, He is a God of compassion, but He is also a God of glorious majesty, might and power. And above all, He is a God of HOLINESS, who HATES SIN so much that He created a lake of fire in which to imprison all who have given themselves over to it. And I tell you now, He is not a God who could in any way be represented by a movement involving animal noises, drunken foolishness, hyena-like laughter, or ugly epileptic-type ‘jerking’ amongst His people.

This is why Toronto was such a good ‘test’ for the Laodicean church. And frankly, it is my belief that this Laodicean revival has exposed today’s lukewarm church for what she really is – a sitting duck, completely prone to the most obvious deception from the enemy – a “happiness club”, still desperate for feel-good touches and blessings after all these years.” – Andrew Strom

Randy:

The argument that manifestations are of the New Age and, as such, are indicators of “the last days – the days of ‘great deception’ and ‘lying signs and wonders’” reveals an eschatological viewpoint that has been influenced by Dispensationalism. Subscribers to this theory see the end times as a time represented by the lukewarm church of Laodicia being rescued by the secret Rapture, rather than having an eschatological worldview of a great end time revival when God’s Spirit will be poured out upon “all flesh.” This is the view of some of the best commentators on the book of Revelation. In addition, the fear of end times false signs and wonders is greatly misplaced. All too often the finger is pointed at another Christian group or brother, instead of the people or teachings that would fit the following passages which deal with this stem of thought: Matt 24:24, 2 Thess 2:9, Rev. 13:13-14, 16:14, and 19:20. Again, the key to discerning false signs and wonders is whether or not those working them lead people away from the worship of the Triune God, whether they bear bad fruit, and whether they deny the incarnation. It is time to stop looking in the Church and look outside the Church for the source of these lying signs and wonders.

It is a big assumption to make, to state that the cause of the deception and apostasy will arise from within rather than outside the church, one the Bible does not appear to support. Matt 24 doesn’t explicitly indicate the

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attack will come from within the church, and Thess. 2:9, Rev. 13:13-14, 16:14, and 19:20 all indicate that it is from outside the church. Again, in context, there are doctrinal and ethical issues that are clues to discernment. Manifestations are never mentioned in the Bible as the basis of discerning the anti-Christ spirit or false prophets. The issues are doctrinal, preaching a different Jesus, different Spirit, different gospel, denying the incarnation - that Jesus became flesh - or belittling the earthly life of Jesus while honoring the Resurrected Christ. The author references 1Tim 4:1 to defend his position, giving special attention to the mention of "seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." Note again, however, that the issue is not manifestations of devils but doctrines of devils. This same letter also tells us that in the latter days there will be a form or religion but denying the power thereof. 1 Corinthians 12:1 says "no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God say, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."

Last days and Laodicean revival reveals a theology based upon dispensationalism that doesn’t fit with Scripture or with church history. It was Dr. Jack Deere who noted in one of his books, Surprised by the Power of God that church history and the dispensational scheme, such as that of C.I. Scofield, doesn’t match up. Strom doesn’t even realize that his own Laodicean Revival understanding of revival is based upon Margaret McDonald’s visionary experience in Port Glasgow, Scotland, which became the basis for the dispensational view of the end time church being characterized by the Laodicean Church in the book of Revelation. This view has caused many to be closed to a great end-time revival that was the hope of the Puritans, the founder of the Baptist Seminary Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, J. R. Graves, and many of the great leaders of the Church prior to 1830.

The view of most of those involved with Toronto is not a Laodicean end time church, but a powerful end time church in revival, experiencing both powerful revival and great persecution which causes a great falling away of the hypocrites and the nominal, while at the same time bringing in a great harvest of souls. This was the great Puritan hope, as well as the belief of the founder of Southwestern Theological Seminary, J.R. Graves. Graves held to the post-millennial view and, in his commentaries on the Bible, there are references to a great end time church.
Focus and Fruits of Toronto:

“Obviously, one aspect that has been particularly alarming about the Toronto movement has been the tendency to simply abandon the practise of ‘testing’ spiritual experiences and new teachings against the Scriptures. The Bible tells us to “test all things”, and of course there is the well-known verse: “All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, FOR CORRECTION, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). But how can the Scriptures be used for ‘correction’ if we choose to “explain away” the need for Scriptural proof of our experiences and teachings, etc? If we don’t use the Scriptures to ‘test’ things any more, aren’t we opening the door to every heresy, false doctrine or demonic experience in existence? (As history clearly demonstrates). This “casting off” of the authority of Scripture, and even of good, old-fashioned common sense, I have personally found to be amongst the most disturbing aspects of the whole ‘Toronto’ affair.

In saying all of this about Toronto, however, I do not want to give the impression that I am opposed to every kind of ‘unusual’ spiritual occurrence. God Himself often does unusual things in times of Revival. But there is a certain ‘character’ about them that stamp them as being from Him. For instance, tremendous conviction (which is very common in true Revivals) will often bring extreme distress over sin (wailing, weeping, etc), ‘trembling’ with Godly fear, people falling face-down before God, etc. At the same time, the awesome presence of God will often cause those who have experienced His cleansing and forgiveness to be filled with indescribable joy and thanksgiving to God, resulting in demonstrative, unrestrained worship and adoration of Him.

However, I believe that it will be very important in the coming Revival for the leaders to stress that true worship involves “GIVING OUT” to God, not expecting ‘touches’ or blessings “FROM” Him all the time. True worship is an act of pure and holy ‘sacrifice’ to God. This is a very important principle. It is usually when people begin to seek after ‘touches’ or experiences from God, rather than seeking Him for His own sake, that counterfeit manifestations or soulish excesses begin to enter in.

Obviously, as well as Godly sorrow, holy fear and great joy, we can also expect a genuine outpouring of the Holy Spirit to bring all of the ‘gifts’ of the Spirit into everyday Christian life: Powerful healings and miracles, deliverance, word of knowledge, tongues, interpretation, prophecy, etc. It is also probable that there will be people genuinely “falling down under the power of God” (not that we should ever ‘seek’ such experiences), visions, dreams, angelic visitations, “signs in the heavens”, etc. Of course, a large number of these things can be easily counterfeited by the devil, so it will be important to have godly leaders around, who will know how to step in (without being too ‘heavy’ about it) if things start to get out of hand. The emphasis of the coming Revival will be on purity, holiness and evangelism, not the seeking after of ‘experiences’. And of course, everything will be centred around Christ. But it is very important that we do not allow the devil’s counterfeits to “scare us off” every kind of unusual spiritual occurrence, otherwise we could miss out on what God is doing also.

As I said at the beginning, in forming my opinions about ‘Toronto’ I have not just stood afar off, making judgements about this movement from a distance. Rather, I have personally witnessed these manifestations for myself, as well as speaking with many people who have seen and experienced them also. But none of this has changed my mind. In fact, every ounce of discernment within me has been crying out right from the start that what I was seeing was not of God. I have also read much that is ‘pro-Toronto’, but have found myself singularly unconvinced – particularly when the Scriptural and historical arguments used have been so patently poor. As we have seen, history clearly shows that such manifestations should be regarded as demonic counterfeits. Having studied Revival history now for many years, I simply do not believe that such a conclusion can be denied.” – Andrew Strom
Randy:

The Bible tells us to "test all things," as the author aptly points out, but the Bible and church history also indicate that God often "does a new thing." Church history reveals that every time the new thing – often not entirely new, but new in the lifetime of the recipients – it is rejected by part of church and often called the work of Satan. We can see this again and again in the history of the church:

- The rejection of the phenomena of falling and laughing of the First Great Awakening
- The jerks of the Second Great Awakening
- The experience of speaking in tongues in the Pentecostal Revival
- The exercise of the prophetic gift and the recognition of the restoration of the offices of Apostles and Prophets in the Latter Rain Revival
- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit with wine drinking Lutherans and Episcopalians now speaking in tongues (this was cause for many Pentecostals to not accept the Charismatic Renewal as a work of God)
- The Catholic Pentecost of 1967 was rejected by those who believe you can’t be a Christian and stay in the Catholic Church, who believe the Holy Spirit presence and working of miracles is primarily to prove correct doctrine, hence, the legitimacy of the move of God among Roman Catholics had to be rejected
- The Jesus Movement’s reaching the hippies and their desire to live in community, to not get a haircut, to write new songs and use guitars and drums in the worship services caused many to reject them and move as not of God
- The Vineyard movement in the 1980’s for John Wimber’s ecumenical spirit, his love of the whole church, his desire to teach people how to naturally move in the supernatural without becoming weird or religious, his rejection of both the classical Pentecostal position that you had to speak in tongues to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, and that this experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit had to occur subsequent to conversion. Additionally, Wimber’s rejection of the classical evangelical position that conversion is the consummate experience of the Holy Spirit, that you receive everything at the moment of conversion, that tongues are not “a” sign of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not available to the church today, and his acceptance of the diversity of how people were baptized in the Holy Spirit in the New Testament made him open to accepting the continued diversity in people’s experience today.
- The revival of the 1990’s was rejected because of the laughter, the appearance of being drunk, and a strong emphasis on grace in Rodney Howard-Brown’s messages, as well as the emphasis of Toronto and its itinerates. Brownsville/Pensacola was rejected because it had some of the same phenomena/manifestations that were occurring in Toronto.

The Vineyard was also rejected by some because of Wimber’s prior Quaker influence, which taught that the clergy need not dress religiously (instead of a clerical collar – Wimber didn’t emphasize the wearing of the clerical suit and tie). Additionally, Wimber emphasized that the early Quaker tradition of listening for God to speak
(the inner light) was to be seen now as a way some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit worked. He was influenced by the Evangelical’s commitment to the Word of God as the basis of practice and doctrine and the Pentecostal’s emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit and the continuation of the gifts of the Spirit.

Additionally, he emphasized the early Quaker tradition of not becoming emotional for the Spirit to move, but quieting your soul and listening with your mind to the Spirit, along with the model of John Wesley in wanting to impact the masses and the poor. Wimber and the Vineyard were rejected by people who were much more dogmatic than he was, who did not have an ecumenical spirit to “love the whole Church,” but instead believed that their way was the only way that God did things. For these reasons people rejected him and the Vineyard.

Neither Toronto nor the Vineyard movement cast off the Scripture – both held a high value on the Scripture. As Wimber once said when someone, upset about something happening in the Vineyard, asked him how far he was going to let this go: “No further than this book.” Then he would say, “And they took comfort in that! Don’t they know what all is in this book!” He taught us to keep the main and the plain. He told me his favorite sermon of the renewal out of Toronto was my sermon, called "Jesus." This message had four points:

1. Keeping Jesus the focus of our mountain top experiences
2. Keeping Jesus the focus of our preaching
3. Keeping Jesus the center of our healing ministries,
4. Keeping Jesus the focus of our worship, not the four living creatures that surround the throne.

Jesus’ own message was mercy when He quoted Isaiah 61 in Luke 4:18, stopping before the remainder of the passage which dealt with judgment. The judgment is for His next appearing. God’s goodness towards us can also be the source of bringing us to repentance. We can get a revelation of His love for us that brings us to tears and to repentance, and just as godly sorrow can produce crying, so godly joy can produce laughter. Incidents of both can be found in the Scripture:

- Job 4:14 "Fear and trembling came over me and caused all my bones to shake."
- Psalms 2:11 "Serve the Lord with reverential awe, and rejoice with trembling."
- Daniel 10:8-11 "I was left alone, looking at this great vision. No strength was left in me; my face grew deathly pale, and I was powerless. 9 I heard the words he said, and when I heard them I fell into a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. 10 Suddenly, a hand touched me and raised me to my hands and knees. 11He said to me, "Daniel, you are a man treasured by God. Understand the words that I’m saying to you. Stand on your feet, for I have now been sent to you." After he said this to me, I stood trembling."
- Acts 2 provides scriptural evidence for acting in a drunken way was part of the Day of Pentecost.

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53 I personally heard Wimber say this several times when he was alluding to his testimony, I’m a Fool For Christ, Whose Fool Are You? I also heard him state this at a few of the conferences where I had traveled to hear him.
At Toronto, not every manifestation was of God - there was also demonic mixed in with God, but this always happens in revival. If something looked nasty, vulgar, it was probably the demonic manifesting, but the majority of the manifestations were of God. Even Jesus had the demonic show up when He went to the synagogue. Our minds were involved in discerning, ministry teams were trained to shut down the demonic and the people were told to be aware of thoughts and feelings as they received prayer. There was a lot of searching the Bible and church tradition regarding what was happening and several significant Bible teachers, like R. T. Kendall, were involved.\(^5\)

Those involved at Toronto had a sense of responsibility to take the message of renewal, evangelism, mercy ministry and mission to the nations. Not everyone who came to Toronto or was touched by someone from Toronto made the connection between being filled up to be poured out. Some did return to their churches and emphasized the Father’s love, the soaking in His presence, but failed to make the connection of receiving to give, filled to be poured out. The ones who didn’t make this connection did not experience the length of the renewal as those who did and their experience of the visitation of God ended sooner.

Toronto was a movement that presented the Father as loving, merciful, welcoming, friend of sinners, a movement that emphasized the widows and the orphans, a movement that said God wants us to be sons and daughters not “hired servants.” (Luke 15), a movement that led well over 2,000,000 to Christ since 1994 by just two people touched there. No one knows the total affect of Toronto in regard to evangelism, but I believe it would now, in 2010, be closer to 4 million people who have been saved. Again with just two people’s experiences of impartation, 12,000 churches were started from 1995-2010, just 15 years. This does not count hundreds of churches, planted in Brazil by those touched by the power of God through the itinerate ministers that went out from Toronto to the nations of the world. Again, if we knew how many churches were started by all who were impacted, I believe it would be several thousand more.

From the beginning there was an emphasis on surrender, on the cost, but there was also a strong emphasis on grace. Humility, love, passion for missions and evangelism, and moral purity characterize a move of God, and all of those things were prevalent in Toronto. It would be hard to find missionary or any other type of Christian work that would be more representative of ‘holy sacrifice’ than that seen in Iris Ministries with Rolland and Heidi Baker, in Sophal Ung’s work in Cambodia, or in Mike and Dena Vantil’s work in China among dying and deserted Chinese children. All of these were powerfully touched either in Toronto or by someone from Toronto who prayed for them. These ministries are great examples of sacrificial worship in abandoned lives.\(^5\)

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\(^5\) Kendall pastored Westminster Chapel in London, where D. Martyn Lloyd Jones and G. Campbell Morgan had been the previous pastors. This was the flagship church for the Evangelicals in England. Kendall received his PhD from Oxford University and another PhD from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a brilliant scholar of the Bible.

\(^5\) Heidi and Rolland story is in their book, *There Is Always Enough*. I am presently working on publishing a book on Sophal story which is one of the most powerful stories I have ever heard. It will pick up where the book, *Anointed for Burial* by Todd and DeAnne Burke ends. This is the story of the birthing of the Protestant Church in Cambodia.
Dr. Gary Greig:
My mailman says he is an avid student of U.S. history—does that mean I should believe every off-the-wall statement he makes about the history of this country? The evidence, and the discernment God’s Spirit gives us about the evidence, is what matters, not opinions. The fact that the author has “studied Revival history” demonstrates nothing about his ability to accurately explain all the relevant evidence against the background of a biblical theology of revival and the power of God’s Spirit. Clearly the author has not studied either Scripture or the history of revival carefully enough to make the claims he makes in this letter.
Addendum

In defense of:

- Don Williams, (regarding Rodney Howard Browne)
- R.T. Kendall, (regarding Rodney Howard Browne)
- James Beverly, (regarding Toronto)
- Randy Clark, (regarding Todd Bentley)

The Lakeland meetings ended due to the evangelist Todd Bentley separating from his wife, then divorcing her and marrying one of his employees. This was truly a tragic thing, causing great shame to fall upon his ministry and the meetings in Lakeland. It is listed as a move of God, a revival, nonetheless, because of the sovereign way in which it broke out, the power of God in the meetings, the true heart of the local pastor who was sponsoring it, who walked in integrity, and the associates of Todd who were not involved in his sinful choices. There were also many pastors who attended the meetings, got touched by the power, and returned home to have a fresh visitation of the Spirit in their churches and a fresh power for healing in their ministries.

The Bible says that the signs follow the preaching of the word, and the presentation of the gospel. I believe that this explains how people who are imposters - like in the movie Leap of Faith, the novel Elmer Gantry, the true story of Marjo - experienced people being healed under their preaching, even when they were fakes. I am not meaning to imply that I think Todd Bentley was a fake - merely that the signs following do so when the full gospel of the Kingdom is being preached. I further recognize that most people do not understand this principle and therefore the tragedy of Todd’s decisions and his sin, caused many to reject the legitimacy of the healings and conversions or rededications that occurred in Lakeland, caused doubt to come upon many regarding the whole “gospel of the Kingdom” preaching ministries, and doubts about the supernatural nature of Christianity. This is truly tragic and it is most unfortunate that the “enemy came in and destroyed through sin the move of God at Lakeland.

Gary Greig, (regarding Todd Bentley) I agree with Randy that Todd Bentley’s decision to divorce his wife was sinful, as Todd finally admitted himself. But the healings and manifestations of the Spirit in Todd’s Lakeland ministry were no more demonic than were the manifestations of the Spirit on Samson in Judges chapters 13-17. Even while Samson was living in moral sin, still God’s Spirit worked powerfully through him to free God’s people from the grip of their enemies, the Philistines. Why does God’s Spirit still choose to flow through sinful servants? First, “God’s gifts and His calling are irrevocable” (Rom. 11:29), and secondly the case of Samson demonstrates that God’s Spirit so desires to move on behalf of His people, that He will use even a sinful vessel like Samson to do so. This does not justify Todd Bentley’s sin any more than Samson’s sin. God will judge sin always, but claiming that God’s Spirit did not move through Todd Bentley because he was sinful is clearly refuted by the biblical case of Samson. We don’t justify sin, either in Bentley or in Samson, but neither can we jump to an unbiblical conclusion that the work of the Spirit behind these men was actually a demonic spirit.

- Timeline of Revivals
- Related Books and Articles
Holding a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from the University of Chicago, Dr. Gary S. Greig earned his undergraduate degree at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel. Both taught him about thorough, systematic and thoughtful research, something he carried with him through over 15 years of study and research. A former Associate Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Regent University School of Divinity, Dr. Greig currently serves as the Senior Editor of Bible and Theology for Regal Books.

Randy Clark, a noted international speaker, received his M.Div from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Best known for the part he played in sparking the revival affectionately labeled the Toronto Blessing, he continues to demonstrate the Lord’s power to heal the sick with great tenacity. Randy’s anointing in healing is only surpassed by his unmistakable teaching gift. His message is simple: “God wants to use you.”